



## KATHLEEN RYAN

A ravishing, soft-spoken beauty with deep copper-coloured hair, Kathleen Ryan was in her last year at drama college in her native Dublin when director Carol Reed came to the city scouting talent for his film *Odd Man Out* (1946). Thus, at 24, Kathleen found herself with the leading role in that film, opposite James Mason. She was subsequently typed largely as flowing-haired colleens and though her height (5ft 7in) made her a little difficult to cast, she found herself with a succession of tall leading men in Stewart Granger (*Captain Boycott*, 1947), Dirk Bogarde (in *Esther Waters*, 1948), Kenneth More (in *The Yellow Balloon*, 1952) and Rock Hudson (in *Captain Lightfoot*, 1954). By then she was in her early thirties and, after a try at a mother role in *Jacqueline* (1956), she drifted out of films. The cinema never made the most of her blend of gentility and resolution and she might have been better advised to try her hand in Hollywood in the early '50s. She died last year from cancer.



## DERMOT WALSH

Another graduate of Dublin's Gate Theatre, Dermot Walsh was in the forefront of Britain's young leading actors during the post-war years. He looked vaguely like other strong-chinned types such as Stewart Granger, Michael Rennie, John McCallum and Patrick Holt and, following a debut in Margaret Lockwood's *Bedelia* (1946), played leading roles in her films *Hungry Hill* (1946) and *Jassy* (1947). He dropped out of movies in 1949 to concentrate on theatre work and never regained his former status in British cinema. But he did return to films from 1952, with only a hint of a soft Irish brogue and the beginnings of an attractive grey streak in his hair. Quickly becoming one of Britain's busiest B feature leads, he played sleuths, reporters and spies, often co-starring with his wife Hazel Court. They married in 1949 and were divorced in 1963. Among their films together were *Ghost Ship* (1952), *Counterspy* (1953) and *A Woman of Mystery* (1958). Walsh continued playing minor heroes until 1966, when he switched back to the stage work that still keeps him busy today.

## DAN O'HERLIHY

Tall, taciturn Dan O'Herlihy, born in Wexford in 1919, was a smiling-eyed hero-villain in the Louis Hayward tradition. From Dublin theatre success, he made his debut in English films (*Odd Man Out*, *Hungry Hill*) in 1946, then went to America. But it was his performance in a Mexican film, Luis Bunuel's *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* that catapulted him into the public eye. He was nominated for an Oscar and although Universal signed him up, the studio gave him little more than personable villains in such costume frolics as *Bengal Rifles* (1954), *The Black Shield of Falworth* (1954) and *The Purple Mask* (1955). He played leads in *That Woman Opposite* (1957) and *The Cabinet of Caligari* (1962) before moving back to top featured roles in *The Tamarind Seed* (1974), *MacArthur — the Rebel General* (1978) and *Halloween III — Season of the Witch* (1983), the latter providing him with a much-relished return to villainy. He was seen more recently under lizard make-up in *The Last Starfighter* (1984).



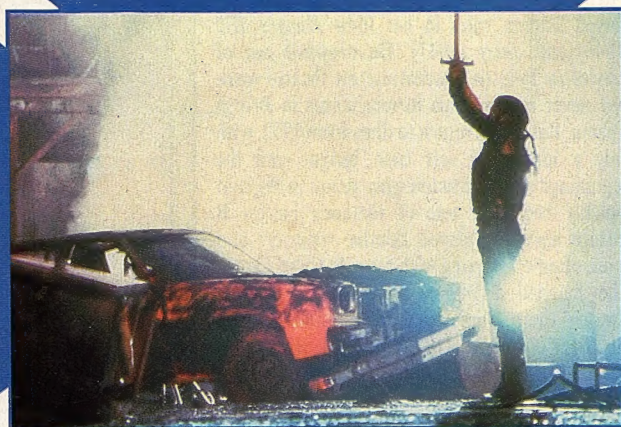
## KIERON MOORE

A tall, dark, broodingly good-looking leading man from Skibbereen in County Cork, Kieron Moore played his first leading role at 20 in *The Voice Within* (1945), acting under his real name, Kieron O'Hanrahan. He had changed it to Moore by the time he began the major part of his career in British films two years later. His excellent performance as the schizophrenic RAF officer in *Mine Own Executioner* (1947) encouraged his casting as Vronsky in the remake of *Anna Karenina* (1947) opposite Vivien Leigh. But he was stiffish as a romantic lead and throughout his career proved most effective as men under pressure. He went to Hollywood in 1951 and appeared in *Ten Tall Men* and *David and Bathsheba* there. He returned to Britain in 1953, where the best of his later roles proved to be in *Conflict of Wings* (1954), *The Blue Peter* (1955), *The Key* (1958) and *The League of Gentlemen* (1960). After his last film to date, *Custer of the West* (1966) and a moderate TV series, *Ryan International*, Moore became increasingly interested in overseas aid and development, and has worked in the field ever since, contributing two documentary films, *The Progress of Peoples* (1975) and *The Parched Land* (1979).

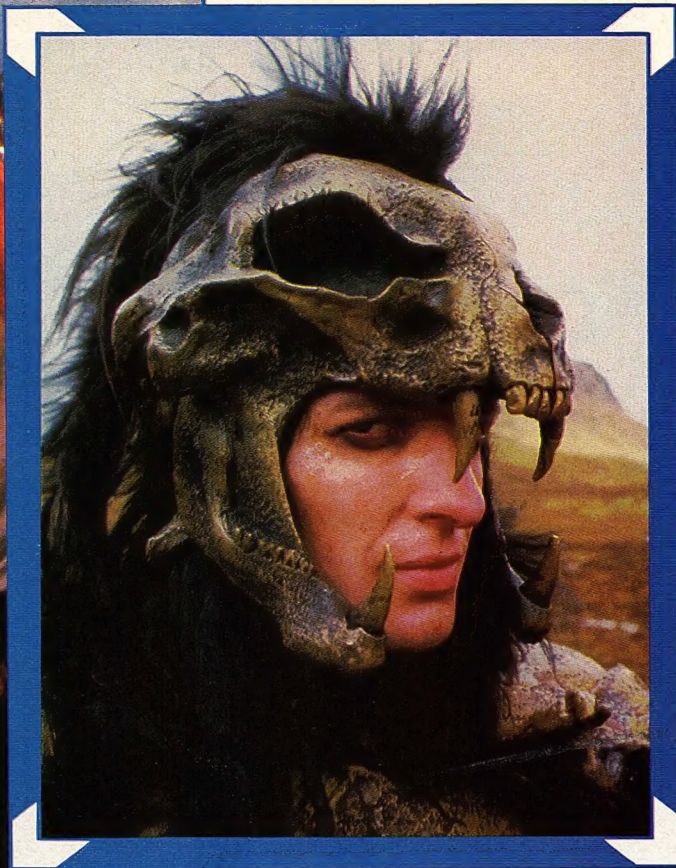




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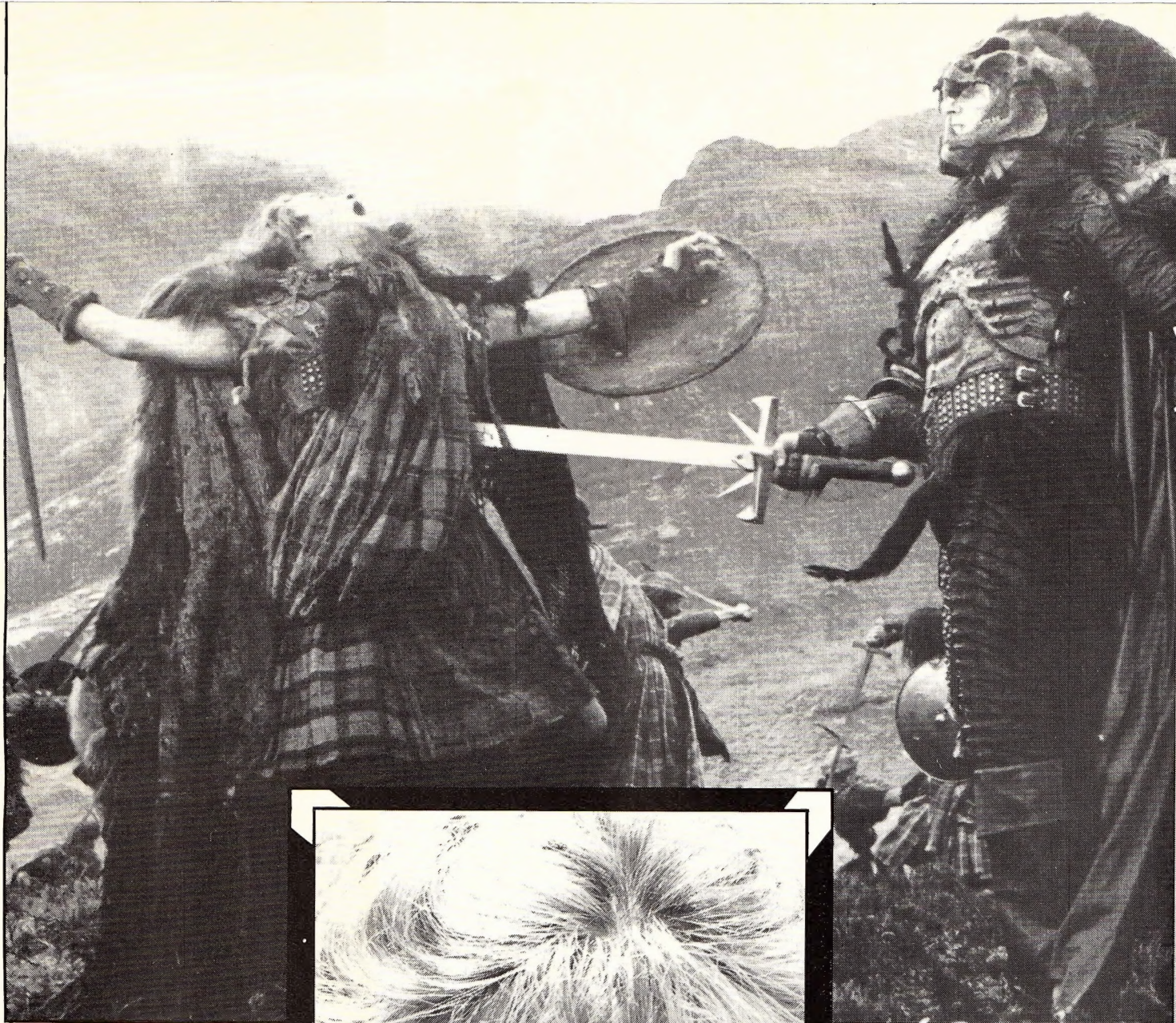
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*Swords clash and immortals battle for supernatural powers in the new fantasy adventure Highlander, starring Sean Connery and Christophe Lambert. Cliff Joseph previews this spectacular blend of medieval drama and modern day action▶*

# A kind of Magic

PHOTOPLAY June 1986





Down through the centuries a small band of men blessed with the gift of immortality live in secret, waiting for the time of The Gathering when they must all come together and fight for 'The Prize' — power beyond imagination. One by one the immortals gather in modern day New York. Their battles wreak havoc in the city, until the last two come face to face in a spectacular fight to decide who will survive to possess The Prize, for "there can only be one."

This is the story told in *Highlander*, starring Christophe Lambert as the central figure Connor



Roxanne Hart

Macleod. The film follows his life from the highlands of 16th century Scotland where he first discovers his immortality, through to present day New York and his final confrontation with the evil Kurgan (Clancy Brown). Sean Connery is cast as the 2000 year-old Ramirez, a flamboyant nobleman who becomes Lambert's mentor and prepares him for the time when he will have to face Kurgan, a role which offers Clancy Brown the chance to play a memorable villain. Tall and menacing, he strides through the film in bizarre leather and snake-skin outfits, brandishing a broadsword at anyone who stands in his way (at one





(Above) Christophe Lambert and Sean Connery; (left) Lambert and Clancy Brown

point even terrorising a group of nuns).

Among the mortals in the cast are the simple Highland girl Heather (Beatie Edney, daughter of actress Sylvia Sims) and the modern, sophisticated investigator Brenda Wyatt (Roxanne Hart). These are the two women, centuries apart, with whom Lambert falls in love. And it was this contrast in his character's life, set first in ancient Scotland and then in modern America, that proved fascinating to Lambert when he originally read the script.

"The guy is immortal, which is amazing because he can do what he wants and nobody can kill him. But

there is also something very sad about that. There is a strange duality to the character — he is very excessive and in his early days in Scotland he is like a young dog who faces danger and fights hard. When he is in present day New York, he is more like an old dog who has learnt a lot."

In addition to blazing action and a powerful love story, according to Lambert *Highlander* contains all the elements essential to any film with the emphasis on entertainment.

"People are not going to go to a movie and ask themselves afterwards what it was all about. They just want to sit down and enjoy themselves and have a good time and cheer and cry and laugh. That's what movies are made for."

And Lambert should know, having achieved cult popularity with his last two films *Subway* and *Greystoke*. It was after seeing Lambert's performance in the latter that director Russell Mulcahy chose him to play

the hero of *Highlander*.

"He's got these fabulous eyes that you look at and — without sounding contrived — you can read centuries in those eyes. He's just perfect as Connor Macleod."

Ironically, the French actor has been cast as a Scot, while genuine Scotsman Sean Connery plays a character born in Egypt. The two stars got on famously during filming and Connery even helped Lambert with his Scottish accent.

For director Mulcahy, *Highlander* marks his first major production and only his second full-length feature (the first being the low-budget *Razorback*). Prior to that he had established an extremely successful career directing music videos for some of the world's top rock artists including Elton John and Duran Duran. And indeed Mulcahy's background in videos has played an important part in the filming of *Highlander*. Music videos are often shot on tight budgets and

schedules (normally under three days) and efficient shooting is absolutely vital. Such a discipline enabled Mulcahy to achieve in one day on *Highlander* what would have taken other directors twice as long. (Incidentally, the music for the soundtrack has been provided by top rock band Queen, who previously produced the score for *Flash Gordon*.)

Because of the time span in the story, *Highlander* features a spectacular range of visual styles: from battles between Highland warriors to modern day car chases, sword fights on New York rooftops and amazing special effects. In fact it was Mulcahy's visual style in *Razorback* that convinced producers Peter Davis and William Panzer that he was the right choice for the film.

"There were certain aspects of *Razorback* which really exhibited an extraordinary shooting style," says Panzer.

"*Highlander* cried out for a willingness to roll the dice and go for it — to take interesting material and bring to it a great visual style that would enhance the material. We decided Russell was the right person."

Meanwhile the visual requirements of the film presented a huge challenge for designer Allan Cameron, who had to create not just authentic Highland castles and villages, but also reproduce the rooftops of New York for the film's climactic battle scenes. The Highland scenes were shot in Scotland itself, but the New York sets, including an exact replica of a large, well-known neon sign, were constructed in a fertiliser warehouse in Greenwich! Still, Cameron says that he likes to think of himself as an 'atmospheric' designer rather than a purely realistic one, and with all the elements that have gone into *Highlander* it could well bring a bit of atmosphere to cinema screens this summer. ■





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